



## JULY UPDATE

# Sparking Kids' Love for Reading



Children in Amigos' Model Classrooms participate in our Afternoon Reading Program after their classes in the public school. Having little opportunity to read at school or in the home, these kids are learning the habit to read for fun, while improving the comprehension and writing skills essential to their education and future. Amigos just doubled our Reading Program space to now include two classrooms where children in preschool to 4th grade can experience the joy of the world of books! They are developing critical thinking skills that are often missing from the public education system in Guatemala, skills that will help them grow into inquisitive children and analytical adults.

## Combating Rising Child Malnutrition in 2019

Over 50% of children in Santa Cruz have growth stunting due to malnutrition, and the number of cases of acute malnutrition has risen sharply in 2019. There are no other organizations currently providing support to these cases, so Amigos is stepping up. We are growing our efforts to get emergency medical assistance, weight gain treatments and vitamin supplements to families in need to provide for the most



urgent situations and help children have a chance of recuperating.

This recent trend of increased acute malnutrition in the Santa Cruz communities, and lack of organizations responding, is concerning and Amigos feels an important responsibility to step up and try to fill that gap. Our emergency efforts are coupled with long-term strategies to improve nutrition including support for home gardens, health and hygiene workshops, and healthy recipe demonstrations. It is essential that all children in Santa Cruz receive the proper nutrition so that they can grow, learn and thrive.

## Training Teachers to Teach Sex Education



Quality education in sexual & reproductive health must be made accessible to all youth in Santa Cruz. In order to ensure quality classes over the long-term for all students, public school teachers must be educated and trained to deliver classes themselves. This is no easy feat in a country where the topic is still taboo, but we are making process.

This year, 55 teachers from the 10 public schools in Santa

Cruz are participating in monthly Amigos-led workshops, with backing from the Ministry of Education, to ensure that they have the knowledge and resources to provide accurate Sexual & Reproductive Health Education for their students. We are ramping up our efforts to ensure that every student in Santa Cruz receives correct information about their bodies to make informed choices about their future and reduce unwanted pregnancies, leading to increased participation in higher education and healthier families.

## Women Not Afraid to Get Their Hands Dirty to Build Economic Opportunity in Tzununa

Sara Pérez Simaj is part of a group of women in the village of Tzununa learning how to work with worms. Lots and lots of worms. As one of the new business initiatives supported this year by Amigos' Women's Empowerment Program, Sara and her business partners are learning how to make organic worm compost that is sold in the local community. They are working hard to build a business that will help them attain a better future for themselves and their families.



Six months ago, Sara and the other 3 women in her group were timid and needed a lot of support from Amigos staff. Now they are motivated by seeing their businesses begin to make a profit, working enthusiastically and independently to grow their sales. They do

hard work that is usually left to men, carrying heavy loads and getting their hands dirty. And they are becoming experts in organic compost production, employing different techniques to improve their product. This is what women's economic empowerment is all about, strengthening women's position in the economy, growing her voice in the community and in the home, and improving the livelihood of her family.

**MAKE A DONATION**



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